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"These days Soviet people mark widely the 40th anniversary of the great victory. They give due credit to the contribution of their Allies in the anti-Hitler coalition to the cause of utter defeat of the hated fascism. We remember the courageous French patriots, soldiers and resistance fighters who made a notable contribution to our common victory.

"In our firm conviction, no task is more important in the world today than to ward off the threat of nuclear annihilation of mankind. The more actively and resolutely members of the public work toward the solution of that task, the better are chances of success."

M.S. Gorbachev

The National Council of the French Republican Association of War Veterans and Victims sent messages to Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and U.S. President Ronald Reagan, which emphasize that many members of that mass French organization fought against fascism shoulder to shoulder with Soviets and Americans during World War II. French war veterans expressed serious preoccupation about the arms race that has unfolded in the world. We realize, the message says, that a military conflict between the two powers would inevitably escalate into a nuclear one. This would have disastrous and irreparable consequences for all of mankind.

Welcoming agreement between the USSR and the U.S. on opening negotiations on nuclear and space arms, the authors of the message note that the joint Soviet-U.S. statement proclaims that the objective of these negotiations will be to work out effective agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear arms, and at strengthening strategic stability.

The message underlines that the negotiations can proceed amid better conditions if research into and the beginning of militarization of outer space are stopped, since it would be illogical to conduct negotiations on preventing a new stage of the arms race and simultaneously begin that stage. They would be far more effective if the deployment of new missiles is terminated for the duration of the talks. This will make it possible to seek agreement in a healthier atmosphere.

In conclusion, the message expresses the wish for the Geneva negotiations to justify the hopes of the peoples.

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KRASNAYA ZVEZDA CARRIES SOKOLOV INTERVIEW ON SDI

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[Unnamed TASS correspondent interview with USSR Defense Minister S.L. Sokolov: "Answers of Marshal of the Soviet Union S.L. Sokolov, USSR Defense Minister, to TASS Correspondent's Questions" -- date and place not given.]

[Text] Question: Comrade Defense Minister, how do you assess claims by U.S. leaders that they are in favor of "safeguarding security on the basis of strategic defensive weapons" while the Soviet Union, they claim, is conducting a strategic offensive arms race?

Answer: The United States, which for the 40 years since World War II has been trying to achieve military superiority, has always acted as the initiator of the arms race. However, these attempts have been promptly thwarted by the Soviet Union's effective retaliatory actions.

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The existing military-strategic equilibrium between the USSR and the United States and between the Warsaw Pact and NATO is a historical gain of the socialist community and an essential condition of its security. It exists objectively today and, unless you resort to deceit, no one can refute that fact. The existence of equilibrium curbs U.S. imperial ambitions and prevents it from achieving world rule. That is why the Washington leaders are trying to break this parity and achieve military superiority over the USSR and its allies.

Under these conditions their statements concerning some kind of shift toward an orientation toward defensive weapons in questions of military building sound strange, to put it mildly. The facts prove that the present administration has no thought at all of "defense." On the contrary, it is counting on acquiring the potential for a first, disarming nuclear strike. For that, the precision of U.S. nuclear weapons capable of striking our retaliatory strike forces, above all, ICBM silo launchers, is being enhanced. Conditions are being created for a surprise nuclear attack with the aid of Pershing II missiles deployed in the West European countries and also long-range cruise missiles of various basing modes deployed close to USSR territory. Various means are being used to camouflage U.S. missiles and bombers in flight in order to restrict opportunities for detecting them as much as possible.

The Pentagon is rapidly developing new strategic offensive weapons -- two types of ICBM, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and two types of heavy bombers. Defense Secretary C. Weinberger frankly states that, in creating a space-based ABM system, the United States will also have a "powerful strategic triad" to deliver a crushing nuclear strike jeopardizing the Soviet Union's existence. As we can see, it is by no means a case of an orientation toward defensive weapons but of the constant buildup of the U.S. strategic offensive potential.

The Pentagon is now rushing into space. What for? Once again to attempt to achieve military superiority over the USSR, through space this time. President R. Reagan's so-called "Strategic Defense Initiative" is only called "defensive" as camouflage, while it is in fact aimed at creating a new class of weapon, a space strike weapon.

In an attempt to take strike weapons into space, U.S. officials, counter to the facts, are claiming that the militarization of space began with the emergence of various military satellites and that the USSR has been conducting an arms race in space since then. That is not true. The satellites that both sides possess for communications, navigation, missile attack warning, and others are not strike space weapons. Right now neither the USSR nor the United States has weapons in space. The militarization of space so dangerous to mankind will begin when strike weapons designed to strike targets in space or from space are put into space. It is then that the space arms race will be unleashed, and that is precisely where the United States is leading matters.

The Soviet Union resolutely opposes the arms race on earth and its dissemination to space. Thus, it proposes the only sensible thing: freezing the sides' nuclear arsenals, halting preparation for the creation of weapons to deploy in space, and, on this basis, immediately moving to reductions of armaments stockpiles. To prove more persuasively its sincerity and goodwill, the USSR has stated that from 7 April through November 1985 it is unilaterally ceasing the further deployment of its medium-range missiles and is suspending the implementation of other retaliatory measures in Europe.

This decision confirms our country's desire to do everything to curb the arms race. It is an open road from a moratorium to a reduction. But, as is well known, the United States rejected the Soviet initiative out of hand, thus creating doubt on the sincerity of its statements that it is ready to agree on a nuclear arms reduction.

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Washington officials are now making irresponsible statements to the effect that the moratorium announced by the USSR is not being observed. I will say frankly that this is deliberate and malicious misinformation. The USSR is true to its word; it is not increasing and will not increase its medium-range weapons in the European part of the country by a single missile or aircraft for the duration of the moratorium.

Question: The U.S. Administration claims that the adoption of the Soviet moratorium proposal would mean "the consolidation of the USSR's superiority" in the field of strategic offensive weapons and medium-range nuclear weapons. Does such superiority really exist today?

Answer: There is no "USSR nuclear superiority" in strategic offensive weapons or medium-range nuclear weapons. There is approximate parity with regard to these weapons. Washington is resorting to the distortion of facts in order to justify its unprecedented military programs and the arms race and to conceal its reluctance to reach agreement in Geneva on the nonmilitarization of space and a radical reduction of nuclear weapons.

The equilibrium between the USSR and the United States in the strategic arms field has been carefully verified and acknowledged by the sides during the drafting of the SALT I and SALT II accords. Right now the USSR has a few more delivery vehicles while the United States has the advantage in terms of nuclear charges. But as a whole there is approximate parity.

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff confirm this approximate parity. Their report to Congress (1984) stated: "At present there exists approximate nuclear parity between the United States and the Soviet Union." According to the official figures of the Washington administration itself, the USSR and the United States have an approximately equal number of warheads on ground-launched and sea-launched ballistic missiles. But the United States has far more heavy bombers than the USSR and correspondingly more nuclear charges on them. So if we are speaking of disparity [neravensvo] in the field of nuclear charges on strategic delivery vehicles, then it is in the United States' favor.

In terms of medium-range nuclear weapons the NATO countries now have the advantage both in terms of delivery vehicles (missiles and aircraft) and the number of nuclear charges lifted by these vehicles in one launching (the USSR has 850 vehicles and about 2,000 nuclear charges while NATO has 990 vehicles and over 3,000 nuclear charges).

How is Washington distorting reality? It is failing to count on the NATO side the British and French medium-range missiles and aircraft and the U.S. carrier-based aircraft (a total of nearly 450 delivery vehicles and nearly 1,500 nuclear charges). All the Soviet Union's weapons are counted, even those deployed in the eastern part of the country with no bearing on the balance of forces in Europe.

Those are the facts with regard to nuclear parity. Under these conditions the establishment of a moratorium on the sides' nuclear arsenals and on the creation of strike space armaments, including scientific research work, is a timely, effective, and correct measure from the viewpoint of curbing the arms race. It is totally in the spirit of the accord reached in January. This step would make it possible to prevent the deterioration of the situation and to embark on the solution of the question of reducing nuclear armaments.

Question: Washington leaders call the plans to create a space-based ABM system "humane." They claim that it would make ballistic missiles "unnecessary" and would rid mankind of nuclear weapons. What is the true meaning of the U.S. "star wars" plan?

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Answer: Allegations concerning the "humaneness" of the U.S. space plans have been circulated to mislead the public and to distract its attention from these plans' danger to mankind.

What is Washington really planning? To create an ABM shield over the United States and, at the same time, to deploy first-strike strategic offensive armaments and new space-based strategic forces designed to strike targets on earth, at sea, in the atmosphere, and in space. It is not hard to see that, if these U.S. plans are realized, the Washington strategists might be tempted to use the space ABM shield as cover to risk using nuclear and space weapons for a strike against the Soviet Union and its allies, counting on impunity. According to the Pentagon's designs, the ABM shield is designed to thwart a retaliatory strike from the USSR and to "get," so to speak, in flight, the Soviet missiles which have survived a U.S. first nuclear strike.

In this connection the U.S. Administration's remarks concerning "delivering mankind from nuclear weapons" are outright demagoguery. If, as it assures us, "star wars" are the path to the elimination of nuclear weapons, then why is the United States building up strategic offensive arms on a huge scale, creating more and more new nuclear facilities, deploying Pershings and cruise missiles in Europe, and engaging in the production of 17,000 new units of nuclear ammunition? Common sense suggests the need to freeze the sides' nuclear arsenals and go over to reductions. This is what the Soviet Union proposes.

People in Washington are acting in a different way. They say: Today it is necessary to continue to deploy strategic nuclear weapons; it is, moreover, necessary to militarize space and create a space-based anti-missile system, that is, offensive space strike weapons. And later, when all this has been done, "perhaps after many decades," it will, they say, be possible to reduce or even eliminate nuclear arms.

So it turns out that in order to eliminate nuclear weapons it is first necessary to multiply the stockpiles many times over. According to this logic, the path to nuclear disarmament lies only in the buildup of strategic offensive arms and the militarization of space, and will in any case take many decades. There can, supposedly, be no other path.

Why are they doing this? In order to deceive people and distract their attention from the need for immediate and effective measures to reduce nuclear arsenals. Meanwhile, they carefully hide from the public the dangerous consequences of this course and conceal the interconnection that objectively exists between offensive and defensive arms, which is the basis of the unlimited-duration Soviet-U.S. Treaty on the Limitation of ABM Systems of 1972. They keep quiet about the fact that the creation by one of the sides of a large-scale antimissile system breaks this interconnection, destabilizes the strategic situation, and forces the other side to restore the position either by building up its strategic offensive arms or supplementing them with antimissile systems, or, more likely, both.

In other words, the truth is that the space-based antimissile system which is being created by the United States programs an arms race in all salients and leads to the undermining of international security. This conclusion was clearly formulated by M.S. Gorbachev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, in his talks with a PRAVDA editor: "Just as the appearance of nuclear weapons did not eliminate conventional types of weapons, but only gave rise to an accelerated race for both nuclear and conventional arms, so the creation of space weapons will only have one result: The arms race will become even more intensive and will embrace new spheres."

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From the military viewpoint the American "star wars" plan is an integral part of U.S. nuclear strategy, the first-strike strategy. The true purpose of this plan is to secure the conditions for permanent nuclear blackmail of the Soviet Union and other countries. In view of the fact that the United States categorically refuses to make a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, such intentions constitute a real threat to peace.

Question: The U.S. Government assures us that the "star wars" program is supposedly only a matter of scientific research, which is not banned by the 1972 ABM Treaty, and that the Soviet Union is supposedly engaged in similar research. What can you say about that?

Answer: The White House's assurances that as yet things are confined to harmless research can only mislead. The atom bomb was also a result of research, under the Manhattan project. Everyone knows how that ended for the population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since then the world has been living under a nuclear threat. The "star wars" program involves even greater danger to mankind. It must be banned, and that includes scientific research work.

Washington's excuses about how "research" is permitted by the 1972 treaty are unconvincing. Article 5 of that treaty bans the development, testing, and deployment of space-based ABM systems or components. The so-called research taking place in the United States with the aim of creating an ABM system with space-based elements is already going beyond the bounds of scientific studies.

Certain experimental models of space strike weapons are being elaborated: various types of lasers, electromagnetic guns, interceptor missiles, and antisatellite systems. All these are components of an antimissile space defense, the "bricks to build the eventual system," as Keyworth, adviser to the President, put it. The research work to create these "bricks" is in direct contradiction to the 1972 treaty and must be stopped and banned.

The White House's assurances that after the completion of research work the United States could supposedly renounce the deployment of a large-scale space-based ABM system are not serious. It is difficult even to imagine that \$60 billion, the expenditure planned for scientific research work over 10 years, is necessary purely in order to resolve a theoretical question, whether or not it is possible to create space strike armaments. In a CBS interview on 13 January this year, C. Weinberger stated frankly: "I exclude the possibility of renouncing strategic defense either at the research or deployment stage." Commentary is superfluous.

Now for the question of space research in the Soviet Union. We do scientific research work, including work in the military sphere. This work is not aimed at creating space strike weapons, but is connected with improving space-based early warning, reconnaissance, communications, and navigation systems. We are not creating space strike weapons or an ABM defense of the country's territory. The USSR firmly adheres to the open-ended treaty of 1972.

Question: The American plans to create a space ABM system, as you have explained, are designed for the purposes of a nuclear strike with impunity against the Soviet Union. What might be the nature of the USSR countermeasure?

Answer: If the United States commences the militarization of space and thereby undermines the existing military-strategic equilibrium, the Soviet Union will be left with no choice but to adopt countermeasures to restore the situation.

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This could be measures in the sphere of both defensive and offensive arms. It goes without saying that the USSR will choose the means of action that most accord with the interests of its defense capability, and not those toward which figures in Washington would like to incline it. I consider it necessary to stress quite definitely that our measures will be adequate to the threat which could be created to the Soviet Union and its allies.

The U.S. course of militarization of space will have an extremely negative effect on the military-political situation in the world and will make the resolution of the problem of nuclear arms reduction more difficult, if not impossible. The creation of space strike weapons will inevitably result in a lessening of security both for the United States itself and for its allies. The initiators of "star wars" and those who are inclined to complicity in this provocative program should not forget that outcome.

As we have repeatedly stated at the highest level, the Soviet Union does not seek to obtain any unilateral advantages over the United States and the NATO countries. We do not need that, since we have no intention of threatening them or imposing our own will on them, but want to live in peace with them and maintain normal, good relations. Our aim is to end the arms race and entirely eliminate nuclear weapons everywhere.

I would like the United States to understand the Soviet stance at the Geneva talks and reciprocate. It must renounce attempts to impose on the Soviet Union an agreement that is unacceptable to it and that would leave the doors wide open for the implementation of Washington's planned military programs. "We propose to the U.S. Government," M.S. Gorbachev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, says, "that matters be conducted in such a way that it is clear to everyone, our peoples and other countries, that the policy courses of the USSR and the United States are oriented not toward enmity and confrontation, but toward the quest for mutual understanding and peaceful development."

BOGACHEV ON U.S. PRESSURE ON ALLIES OVER SDI

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["Europe: Europeans Against Reagan's 'Star Wars'" -- TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow, 4 May (TASS) -- TASS military observer Vladimir Bogachev writes:

Washington's roughshod methods of pressure and resorting to force in order to drag its allies into its new military-space ventures are evoking growing indignation in West Europe.

Having announced in March 1983 his plans to prepare for "star wars" without any kind of prior consultations with his allies, President Ronald Reagan later went on to warn repeatedly that the work to create an U.S. space-based anti-missile defense would go ahead come what may. In suggesting to the West European countries that they report back "within 60 days" as to whether they were "interested" in taking part in the program, U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was in effect admitting that the United States had no intention of getting involved in lengthy debates with its allies on the acceptability or inacceptability for them of American plans for the militarization of space.

As has happened a number of times before, Washington initially preferred to confront its NATO partners with a fait accompli regarding its military preparations, at the same time insisting on unquestioning support from the West Europeans for the American plan to create a large-scale anti-missile defense system.